



Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District
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LOCAL CLEAN AIR GAINS CONTINUE DESPITE SLIGHT SMOG INCREASE IN 2002

Lancaster -- Although Antelope Valley residents experienced slightly more smoggy days this summer than last, local air quality trends continued to demonstrate remarkable progress toward eradicating smog in the region, officials at the Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District (AVAQMD) have announced.

During the 2002 smog season – which spanned from May to October – five exceedances of the federal .12 parts per million (ppm) one-hour ozone standard were recorded within the AVAQMD's boundaries, which encompass the cities of Palmdale and Lancaster. In contrast, the Antelope Valley logged three federal exceedances in 2001, while two days exceeded the federal health standard during 2000.

The modest rise in unhealthful ozone days in the Antelope Valley mirrored a statewide trend in increased smog levels this summer, caused by hotter than normal temperatures, coupled with ozone-forming gasses from wildfires that raged through California. Locally, windblown smog from the San Joaquin and the Santa Clarita Valleys – areas that logged some of the state's highest air pollution levels this summer - was the major cause of increased smog levels in the Antelope Valley in 2002.

Despite this increase, data from the 2002 ozone season reflects a dramatic improvement in local air quality from 1992, when 25 ozone exceedances were recorded in the Antelope Valley

The Antelope Valley's 2002 ozone readings also compared favorably with those measured in the nearby South Coast Air Basin (SoCAB), which includes the metropolitan Los Angeles area. By October of 2002, 49 unhealthful days had been recorded within the SoCAB, up from 36 days recorded in 2001 and 40 in 2000.

Unfavorable weather trends and wildfire activity notwithstanding, the Antelope Valley continues to enjoy some of the best air quality anywhere in Southern California, according to Chuck Fryxell, Air Pollution Control Officer for the AVAQMD. "Despite our proximity to major

metropolitan hubs, the Antelope Valley has not experienced a Stage 1 episode (when ozone levels reach .20 ppm) since the late '80's," commented Fryxell.

According to Fryxell, reducing pollution from cars, trucks and other mobile sources – which account for more than 60% of ozone forming emissions in the region – is the key to perpetuating the Antelope Valley's long-term air quality improvement trend. "By making and supporting wise transportation choices, Antelope Valley residents can help secure our legendary clean air for future generations," stated Fryxell, adding that local entities are encouraged to take advantage of the AVAQMD's many mobile source grant funding opportunities, which aim to reduce vehicle emissions in the Antelope Valley.

For information on upcoming grant opportunities, or to learn more about the Antelope Valley's air quality, call the AVAQMD at (661) 723-8070 or visit the District online at www.avaqmd.ca.gov.